



# THE **BUZZ**

FALL 2017

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## Keene Family Thankful for Benefits of Rural Water

The agriculture profession is a demanding business. Even though his focus is on keeping the combines running in the fall, rural water user Beau Wisness is also taking phone calls regarding other pieces of the farming and ranching operation. The day doesn't end when the fields are harvested. The Wisness family have cattle out on summer pastures that need to come home for calving season, so hay and feed need to be considered. Beau and his wife Heather are also active in the community as well as some agriculture-related organizations. With four busy children, the Wisness family understands time is a valuable commodity. They need to have consistency and quality in their farm, ranching, and home operation. With rural water, the health and quality of the water for their family and cattle is one less thing they have worry about.

The Wisness family decided to wait to build a new house until they had rural water service from the Western Area Water Supply Authority (WAWSA) hooked up to the farmstead. "We had plenty of water at the old house," Beau explains as he navigates his John Deere S690 combine in the field. "But it was hard water and we were buying softener by the pallet load. We waited so we could put in new fixtures and not have to worry about replacing them in a short time."

Heather echoes the importance of rural water in their new home. "Good water is absolutely invaluable to us," she says. "Our old well water was very hard and I spent a majority of



The Wisness family of Keene, ND is happy with WAWSA rural water service, which provides water for their home, properties, and cattle.

my time cleaning up the old house after the mess the water made. The mineral content in the well water was so bad it would kill the garden, making us rely on intermittent rains to keep everything alive."

Sitting in his combine with his best farmhand, four-year-old son Charlie, Beau guides the 45-foot combine header as it takes great swaths of canola off the field south of Keene, North Dakota.

*(Continued back page.)*

## State Water Commission Approves WAWSA Funding

The North Dakota State Water Commission approved \$8.75 million for the Western Area Water Supply Project (WAWSP) at its August 2017 meeting. The funding approval comes after the State Water Commission's Budget, House Bill 1020, was signed into law by Gov. Doug Burgum earlier this year. The Western Area Water Supply Authority (WAWSA) is one of several water entities to receive a portion of the \$298 million set aside for new water projects funding in the State Water Commission's budget for the 2017-2019 biennium.

"We are very thankful to the State Water Commission and the Legislature for their continued support of the WAWSP project. This funding will allow us to begin construction this year on projects that will deliver water to residents in Williams, Mountrail, and McKenzie Counties," says Jaret Wirtz, WAWSA Executive Director.

The requested funding will allow construction to proceed on WAWSA rural water service expansions in the Tobacco Garden and Sather Dam areas of McKenzie County, the White Earth Valley area east of Tioga in Williams County, and rural areas outside of Stanley in Mountrail County.

"Over the next two years, WAWSA will focus on constructing transmission pipelines to key population centers and deliver service to hundreds of rural properties that are waiting for high-quality drinking water," says Wirtz.

Currently, a total of 60,000 people receive drinking water from WAWSA. In addition to rural customers across Burke, Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams Counties, residents of Williston, Watford City, Ray, Tioga, Stanley, Wildrose, Crosby, Fortuna, Noonan, Columbus, and Ross also enjoy WAWSA service. ■

### WAWSA 2017 FUNDING



**WAWSA 2017-2019  
Legislative Request  
\$29M**



**SWC Approved  
Funding Aug. 2017  
\$8.75M**

## WAWSA Construction Plans for 2017-2019

WAWSA has requested bids for projects including rural water service expansions in the Tobacco Garden and Sather Dam areas of McKenzie County, White Earth Valley area east of Tioga in Williams County, and rural areas outside of Stanley in Mountrail County. The projects include the installation of 205 miles of pipe to serve at least 217 new users. Pending the outcome of the bids, WAWSA intends to start work on the projects this fall thanks to the State Water Commission's recent approval of \$8.75 million for WAWSA projects.

During the legislative session, WAWSA requested \$20 million from the State Water Commission's budget, supplemented with \$10 million in loans, to complete several rural projects by mid-2019. If the State Water Commission approves additional funding in 2018 or early 2019, WAWSA has prioritized construction on the Spring Creek service area in McKenzie County, a transmission main from the Tioga High Point Reservoir to Stanley, and a Williams Rural Water

District project north of Williston that will deliver drinking water to rural residents and bring water infrastructure to Williston's new airport and elementary school.

"We are thankful for the funding the State Water Commission approved this summer. WAWSA intends to request additional funds in early 2018 so we can continue the project's progress through this biennium," says Jaret Wirtz, WAWSA Executive Director.

To date, WAWSA has constructed more than 1,360 miles of pipeline to deliver water to cities and rural areas in five northwestern North Dakota counties. There are still 750 miles of pipeline that are yet to be installed, with more than 210 miles currently under construction, 120 miles in the design phase, and 420 miles of pipeline construction that has yet to be funded. ■

## WAWSP PROGRESS

**CURRENT PEOPLE  
SERVED BY WAWSA**



**60,000**

1 = 10,000 PEOPLE

**FUTURE PEOPLE  
WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM  
THE WAWSP BY 2038**



**125,000**

1 = 10,000 PEOPLE

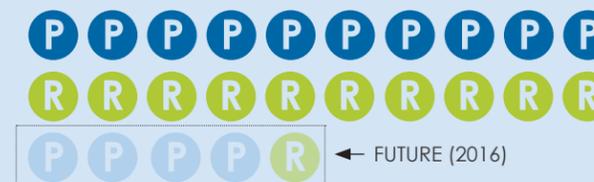
**WATER TREATMENT  
WILLISTON REGIONAL WTP**

**21 MGD**

**WATER TOWERS  
2 WATER TOWERS + 1 FUTURE**



**PUMP STATIONS & RESERVOIRS**



! RESERVOIRS = COMBINED STORAGE OF **10.9MG**

P = PUMP STATION R = RESERVOIR

## WAWSP MILES OF PIPELINE



**1,360+  
INSTALLED**



**210+  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

## Keene Family Thankful (continued)

He explains the value of having rural water for all parts of his operations, especially the cattle. “We winter and calve out several hundred cattle at home. The well water was so poor the cattle would drink from every possible source before they would go to the water tanks.”

“I took a well water sample we had been using for the cattle in for testing,” Beau explains, “and the result was ‘not suitable for cattle.’ I knew that quality water would make a difference in the cattle’s health and their ability to put on pounds. I warned Heather it was going to be more expensive, but in the long run it would be worth the cost.”

The ability to consider the long term led the family to also install pasture taps on the property near their home, as well as future water delivery on their property near Grassy Butte. “We never ran out of water this year, but the cattle had to travel long distances. This is even more dramatic on land in southwestern North Dakota,” Beau says. “By having water in correct locations, we can better manage the grasslands and pasture areas. Good management, especially with water, will keep the entire ecosystem in better shape.”

Taking care not to lose sight of the combine machine operations and his son, Beau shares why his family is so passionate about high-quality water. “If we can best manage our resources, including water, it will make a difference in our entire region for many generations.” Heather agrees, saying, “I can’t put a price tag on quality water for my family.” ■



Beau Wisness and his son Charlie take a break from combining.